

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Appln. No. National Stage Entry of PCT/JP03/10899
Attorney Docket No. Q85912

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original): A fluoropolymer producing method
which comprises polymerizing a radical polymerizable monomer in a manner of
continuous polymerization in a defined reaction-field to give the fluoropolymer,
wherein said defined reaction-field is in a supercriticality-expression state and under a
pressure of not higher than 40 MPa and a temperature of not higher than that higher by 100°C
than the supercriticality-expression temperature of the defined reaction-field,

said radical polymerizable monomer comprises a fluorine-containing ethylenic monomer,
and

said fluoropolymer has a weight average molecular weight [Mw] of not lower than
150,000 as determined on the polystyrene equivalent basis and

a ratio [Mw/Mn] of the weight average molecular weight [Mw] on the polystyrene
equivalent basis to a number average molecular weight [Mn] of the fluoropolymer on the
polystyrene equivalent basis is higher than 1 but not higher than 3.

2. (original): A fluoropolymer producing method
which comprises polymerizing a radical polymerizable monomer in a manner of
continuous polymerization in a defined reaction-field in the presence of carbon dioxide to give
the fluoropolymer,

wherein said defined reaction-field is in a supercriticality-expression state,
said radical polymerizable monomer comprises a fluorine-containing ethylenic monomer,
said carbon dioxide amounts to at most equimolar to said radical polymerizable
monomer, and

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said fluoropolymer has a weight average molecular weight [Mw] of not lower than 150,000 as determined on the polystyrene equivalent basis and

a ratio [Mw/Mn] of the weight average molecular weight [Mw] on the polystyrene equivalent basis to a number average molecular weight [Mn] of the fluoropolymer on the polystyrene equivalent basis is higher than 1 but not higher than 3.

3. (original): The fluoropolymer producing method according to claim 2,

wherein said defined reaction-field further is under a pressure of not higher than 40 MPa and a temperature of not higher than that higher by 100°C than the supercriticality-expression temperature of said defined reaction-field.

4. (currently amended): The fluoropolymer producing method according to claim 1,
~~2~~
~~or 3,~~

wherein said defined reaction-field has a ratio [ρ_m/ρ_0] of not lower than 1.1, the ratio [ρ_m/ρ_0] is of a monomer density [ρ_m] of a monomer critical density [ρ_0].

5. (currently amended): The fluoropolymer producing method according to claim 1,
~~2~~
~~3 or 4,~~

wherein the polymerization of the radical polymerizable monomer is carried out in the presence of a chain transfer agent.

6. (original): The fluoropolymer producing method according to claim 5,
wherein the continuous polymerization is carried in a condition that an amount of the fluoropolymer in a reaction vessel amounts to at least 8 g per liter of the capacity of said reaction vessel in a steady state.

7. (currently amended): The fluoropolymer producing method according to claim 1,
~~2~~
~~3, 4, 5 or 6,~~

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wherein the fluorine-containing ethylenic monomer comprises at least one species selected from the group consisting of vinylidene fluoride, tetrafluoroethylene, chlorotrifluoroethylene and hexafluoropropylene.

8. (currently amended): The fluoropolymer producing method according to claim 1, 2, ~~3, 4, 5 or 6~~,

wherein the fluorine-containing ethylenic monomer comprises vinylidene fluoride.

9. (currently amended): The fluoropolymer producing method according to claim 1, 2, ~~3, 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8~~,

wherein the polymerization of the radical polymerizable monomer is carried out in the presence of a radical polymerization initiator.

10. (original): The fluoropolymer producing method according to claim 9, wherein the radical polymerization initiator is an organic peroxide.

11. (original): The fluoropolymer producing method according to claim 10, wherein the organic peroxide comprises a peroxydicarbonate, a fluorine-based diacyl peroxide and/or a fluorine-free diacyl peroxide.

12. (currently amended): The fluoropolymer producing method according to claim 1, 2, ~~3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 or 11~~,

wherein the polymerization of the radical polymerizable monomer is carried out in the presence of a nonethylenic fluorocarbon.